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INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

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CORRECTION ISSUED
11:15 a.m. 7/26/66 JBP

VV MJA859JIA148
PP RUEHC
DE RUMJIR 1947 2071125
ZNY SSSSS
P 261035Z
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC
STATE GRNC
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S E C R E T SAIGON 1947

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CORRECTED PAGE 1

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Joan Agnew DATE 10/5/81
RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON (3)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
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SAIGON 1947

E X D I S

JULY 26

FOR BUNDY FROM LODGE

1. YOUR 14754 MAKES IT CLEAR THAT THE VIEWPOINTS HERE AND IN WASHINGTON ARE REALLY FURTHER APART THAN THEY HAVE BEEN AT ANYTIME IN THE LAST YEAR AND, OF COURSE, I REALIZE THAT THIS MAY WELL BE DUE TO DEFICIENCIES HERE IN REPORTING ALTHOUGH WE CERTAINLY TRY TO TELL YOU EVERYTHING - AND TO BACKGROUND THE PRESS AS WELL. IN ANY CASE WHAT 14754 PROPOSES SEEMS OUT OF TUNE WITH REALITIES OF SITUATION IN VIET-NAM.

2. THAT EXPLAINS WHY IT IS HARD FOR US TO GET "DISTURBED" BECAUSE ALMOST "NO STRUGGLE MOVEMENT" CANDIDATES HAVE FILED FOR THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY. FRANKLY, MY WORRY HERE HAS BEEN

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RIGHT ALONG THAT THE GVN WOULD BE TOO WEAK TO PROTECT ITSELF AGAINST THOSE WHO HAVE PROVEN THAT THEY WISH TO OVERTHROW IT BY VIOLENT MEANS. I WAS HAPPY WHEN THE WRIT OF THE GVN WAS RESTORED IN I CORPS. TO FEEL OTHERWISE SEEMS SOMEWHAT SIMILAR TO OUR BEING DISAPPOINTED IN THE U.S. BECAUSE THERE IS NOT A LARGE NUMBER OF ACTIVE, CARD CARRYING COMMUNISTS RUNNING FOR THE HOUSE AND SENATE.

3. I CANNOT SEE THAT THE "STRUGGLE MOVEMENT" QUALIFIES AS ANY KIND OF A "LOYAL OPPOSITION". BY NO STRETCH OF THE IMAGINATION CAN IT BE TREATED AS A POLITICAL MOVEMENT IN THE

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AMERICAN - OR WESTERN - SENSE OF THE TERM. IT DID NOT WORK THROUGH NORMAL POLITICAL ORGANIZATION, AGITATION, PUBLICITY, OR DEBATE. IT WAS A POWER CONSPIRACY WHICH WORKED THROUGH TERRORISM: ASSASSINATION, ARSON, TORTURE AND KIDNAPPING. TYPICAL OF THE "STRUGGLE MOVEMENT" WAS THE WAY IN WHICH IT TOOK OVER THE CITY OF DANANG BY THREATENING TO KIDNAP THE CHIEF OF POLICE'S FAMILY, BURN HIS HOUSE TO THE GROUND, AND KILL HIM BY 6:00 P.M. IF HE DID NOT COME OVER. SUCH PEOPLE HAVE NO PART TO PLAY IN AN ELECTION, ANYMORE THAN COMMUNISTS HAVE. THAT IS ONE THING ABOUT THE "STRUGGLE

MOVEMENT".

4. ANOTHER THING IS THAT THE "STRUGGLE MOVEMENT" HAS BEEN ALMOST ENTIRELY DISBANDED. THERE IS NO DEMAND FROM THEM TO GET ON THE BALLOT. IF WE WERE SOMEHOW TO REVIVE THEM AND TO PUT THEM ON THE BALLOT, THEY WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY OPPOSE THE ELECTION.

5. I BELIEVE WE CANNOT HAVE MADE IT CLEAR TO YOU HOW FRAGILE THE WHOLE SITUATION IS HERE AND HOW LITTLE JUSTIFICATION THERE IS IN REGARDING THE FORTHCOMING ELECTION IN THIS VERY UNDER-DEVELOPED COUNTRY AS THOUGH IT WERE AN ELECTION HELD IN A LAND WHERE DEMOCRACY IS A GOING CONCERN. IN FACT, IT SEEMS FAIR TO ASK HOW MANY OTHER UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES ARE HOLDING ELECTIONS - AND PARTICULARLY IN WAR-TIME. NOT EVEN BRITAIN AND FRANCE HELD ELECTIONS DURING WORLD WAR II.

6. THE ANTI-GOVERNMENT ELEMENTS IN THIS COUNTRY ARE LOOKING HARD FOR ANY SIGN OF AMERICAN SUPPORT. IT PROBABLY WOULD NOT BE TOO HARD FOR US CLANDESTINELY TO ENCOURAGE SOME KIND OF A COUP. I ASSUME WE DO NOT WANT TO DO THIS, AND THAT OUR POSITION IS TO OPPOSE A CHANGE OF THE PRESENT PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT UNTIL A NEW GOVERNMENT IS CHOSEN UNDER THE

CONSTITUTION.

7. I QUESTION NOT ONLY THE SUBSTANCE OF THE ARGUMENT ADVANCED IN 14754, BUT I ALSO BELIEVE WE WOULD UNDERMINE OUR POSITION IF WE GET INTO THIS MUCH DETAIL ON HOW THEY RUN THEIR ELECTIONS. FOR US TO GET INTO SUCH DETAIL BEGINS

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TO GENERATE THE SMELL OF COLONIALISM AND I THINK WE WILL START WEARING OUT OUR PRESTIGE. I HAVE USED THIS PRESTIGE TO DISSUADE KY FROM GOING TO JAPAN, TO DISSUADE HIM FROM GOING TO KOREA, AND TO DISSUADE HIM FROM GETTING RID OF TRAN VAN DO. I AM ABOUT TO TRY ONCE AGAIN TO DISSUADE HIM FROM SENDING MRS. KY TO THE UNITED STATES. I BELIEVE IF WE GET INTO SO MANY CONTESTS FOR THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY, IT WILL ERODE OUR PRESTIGE.

8. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE OBVIOUS DIFFERENCES, I THINK IT IS FAIR TO POINT OUT THAT SOME OF THOSE WHO HAD TAKEN AN ACTIVE PART IN THE CONFEDERACY WERE NOT ALLOWED TO GET INTO POLITICS FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS AFTER APPOMMATOX - JUST AS THE FOLLOWERS OF PETAIN WERE NOT ALLOWED TO DO SO IN FRANCE AFTER WORLD WAR II.

9. THEREFORE, TO CITE THE LANGUAGE OF YOUR PARAGRAPH 2, I DO "PERCEIVE STRONG OBJECTION" TO URGING KY TO TRY TO

GET THE "STRUGGLE MOVEMENT" INTO THE ELECTION - PARTICULARLY WHEN THERE SEEMS TO BE VERY LITTLE DESIRE ON THE PART OF WHAT LITTLE IS LEFT OF THE STRUGGLE MOVEMENT TO GET INTO IT. HOW ONE COULD EXPLAIN TO THE GVN THAT ONE WAS TRYING TO REVIVE THE STRUGGLE MOVEMENT IS HARD TO SEE. IN VIEW OF THE "STRUGGLERS" VIOLENT ANTI-AMERICANISM, VIETNAMESE WOULD REGARD OUR SPONSORSHIP OF THEM AS ABSURD.

10. AS REGARDS YOUR PARAGRAPH 4, I HAVE LEFT THE CLEAR IMPRESSION WITH KY THAT THE MATTER OF WHO IS LIKELY TO EMERGE TO HEAD THE GOVERNMENT UNDER THE CONSTITUTION IS AN OPEN QUESTION. IN FACT, I DID SAY SO SOMETIME AGO, AND HE SEEMED RATHER SURPRISED. I WILL DO IT AGAIN.

11. SEVERAL OF THOSE WHO ARE RUNNING AS CANDIDATES IN SAIGON - GIA DINH AS WELL AS ELSEWHERE THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY HARDLY QUALIFY AS GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED. PHAN KHAC SUU, TRAN VAN VAN, DANG VAN SUNG, AND HO VAN DONG WOULD BE MOST UNHAPPY WITH THE SUGGESTION THAT THEY WERE RUNNING AS KY-CHOSEN MEN. IN POINT OF FACT IT REQUIRED A FAIR AMOUNT OF PERSUASION ON THE PART OF CERTAIN EMBOFFS AND OTHERS TO CONVINCE THESE INDIVIDUALS THAT THEY SHOULD RUN. IF ELECTED, THEY WILL

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PROBABLY BECOME MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION GROUP - HOW LOYAL WILL DEPEND UPON GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND THEIR OWN AMBITIONS.

12. AMONG THE LESSER KNOWN CANDIDATES IN SAIGON ARE GIAP VAN THAP AND MRS. TRAN KIM THOA, TWO OF THE MORE ELOQUENT AND QUARRELSOME MEMBERS OF THE SAIGON CITY COUNCIL WHO, ON THE BASIS OF DEBATES IN THAT BODY OVER THE PAST YEAR, HAVE SHOWN THEMSELVES TO BE ANYTHING BUT TOOLS OF THE GOVERNMENT. ONE OTHER OF THEIR COLLEAGUES FROM THE COUNCIL, DR. HOANG CO BINH, IS RUNNING IN TUYEN DOC PROVINCE. HE TOO HAS FREQUENTLY DEMONSTRATED A WILLINGNESS TO SPEAK OUT IN CRITICAL TERMS AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT.

13. WE ALSO KNOW THAT AS MANY AS NINE CANDIDATES WITH HISTORIES OF PAST VIET CONG, NATIONAL SALVATION OR STRUGGLE FORCE ACTIVITIES SURVIVED THE SCREENING PROCESS IN SUCH PLACES AS DALAT, BAC LIEU, NHA TRANG, QUI NHON AND TAY NINH - SOME OF THEM BEING FAR FROM SAVORY.

14. I BELIEVE GVN SHOULD NOT BE DISCOURAGED FROM TAKING MODERATE MEASURES TO PREVENT THE ELECTIONS FROM BEING USED AS A VEHICLE FOR A COMMUNIST TAKE-OVER OF THE COUNTRY.
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*AS RECEIVED, CORRECTION TO FOLLOW

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INCOMING TELEGRAM Department of State

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EXDIS

JULY 28

1. DURING A CALL ON KY WITH KISSINGER, KY SAID, IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, THAT HE EXPECTED THAT THE DIRECTORATE WOULD SUBMIT TWO OR THREE DRAFTS OF A CONSTITUTION TO THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY. AS REGARDS THE ELECTIONS OF DEPUTIES TO THE ASSEMBLY, THE GVN WILL NOT USE ANY PRESSURE. HE HAD TOLD THANG THAT THE ELECTIONS MUST BE TOTALLY FREE AND LEGAL, AND THAT ONE ILLEGAL ACT WOULD TARNISH THE ELECTIONS. IN II CORPS, GENERAL VINH LOC HAD BECOME OVER-ENTHUSIASTIC AND HAD ENTERED SOME MILITARY MEN, BUT THESE WERE BEING ELIMINATED THROUGH THE DEVICE OF LATE FILING. KY SAID THAT HE WELL REMEMBERED THE WAY IN WHICH DIEM TRIED TO MANAGE AND CONTROL THE ELECTIONS, AND HE WAS DETERMINED NOT TO DO ANYTHING LIKE THIS.

2. HE SAID THAT HE PERSONALLY FAVORED A PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEM, WITH THE PRESIDENT BEING ELECTED BY POPULAR VOTE. HE HAS DEPUTED GENERAL VIEN, THE MINISTER OF SECURITY, TO PRODUCE A DRAFT OF A CONSTITUTION AND HE IS GOING TO KOREA AND FORMOSA TO COLLECT INFORMATION. IF WE IN THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAVE ONE EXPERT THAT WE WOULD LIKE TO PUT IN TOUCH WITH GENERAL VIEN, KY WILL BE GLAD TO HAVE US DO SO.

3. COMMENT: WE WILL SUBMIT A NAME. WE REALIZE THAT THERE ARE MANY CANDIDATES FOR THIS JOB. END COMMENT.

3 4. ON THE QUESTION OF WHO WAS GOING TO RUN FOR PRESIDENT, THE DIRECTORATE WAS NOW CONSIDERING THE QUESTION: "CAN THE MILITARY RUN?" HE DIDN'T SEE ANY CIVILIAN WHO HAS "THE STUFF" (L'ETOFFE). SUU IS TOO OLD, HUONG IS TOO SICK. KY SAID: "I'M TOO YOUNG AND I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT I WOULD ASK TO GO BACK TO THE AIR FORCE AFTER HAVING ORGANIZED THE FIRST GOVERNMENT IN VIET-NAM UNDER THE CONSTITUTION." "THAT," HE SAID, "LEAVES ONLY GENERAL THIEU AROUND WHOM THE MILITARY COULD UNITE, BUT," SAID KY, "THIEU IS NOT OPEN WITH THE PEOPLE. EVEN THE CATHOLICS DON'T LIKE HIM. HE IS NOT POPULAR." KY SAID THAT HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES MUST THINK ABOUT THIS PROBLEM AND GO AND FIND SOMEONE AND PREPARE

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NOW, AS THE ELECTION WILL CERTAINLY BE HELD BY MARCH OF 1967.

5. HE WENT THROUGH THE LIST: CO HAS NO AMBITION AND KNOWS HE CANNOT GO ANY HIGHER; VIEN AND QUANG CONSIDER THEMSELVES PURELY MILITARY; LAM AND VINH LOC ARE YOUNGER THAN KY IS; CHIEU IS MUCH TOO INACTIVE.

6. HE REFERRED TO HIMSELF AS BEING IN A SENSE THIEU'S "CAMPAIGN MANAGER", BUT, SPEAKING IN A WAY WHICH IS NOT THE WAY AN AMERICAN CAMPAIGN MANAGER WOULD SPEAK, HE STRESSED THEIU'S UNPOPULARITY AND SAID THAT HE BELIEVED SUU, ALTHOUGH HE WAS OLD, COULD BEAT THIEU. BUT, HE SAID, THE MILITARY WOULD UNITE ON THIEU.

7. ON THE SUBJECT OF HIS RECENT PRESS CONFERENCE, HE SAID THAT HE BECAME ANGRY AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE NOTION THAT IT WAS ALL RIGHT FOR HO TO SEND TROOPS TO THE DEMILITARIZED ZONE AND WE WOULD SIMPLY ASK HIM NOT TO AND WE STOPPED OURSELVES FROM AN EQUAL RIGHT TO DO TO HIM WHAT HE DID TO US. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE KEY TO HIS STATEMENT WAS THE WORD "DEFINITELY". OBVIOUSLY THE WAR WOULD NOT BE "DEFINITELY" SETTLED UNTIL ALL AGGRESSION FROM THE NORTH WAS ELIMINATED.

8. I SAID THAT THE PROPOSITION THAT THE SOUTH HAD AS MUCH OF A RIGHT TO INVADE THE NORTH AS THE NORTH DID TO INVADE THE SOUTH WAS NOT THE QUESTION. THE QUESTION OF MAKING SUCH A STATEMENT WAS ONE OF JUDGMENT. IT WAS ALSO ONE OF EXPEDIENCY, AND I KNEW OF NO ONE IN THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING MYSELF, WHO THOUGHT THE SOUTH COULD EFFECTIVELY INVADE THE NORTH ALONE NOR DID I KNOW OF ANYONE WHO FAVORED THE U.S. INVASION OF THE NORTH.

9. WHEN QUESTIONED AS TO THE PROBABLE COURSE OF THE WAR, HE SAID THAT HE THOUGHT THAT HANOI WOULD CONTINUE TO TRY TO LAUNCH A FEW MORE BIG ATTACKS, WHICH HE SAID THEY COULD DO. BUT ON THE DAY THAT THEY ARE SURE THEY CAN'T WIN, THEY WILL PULL BACK AND GO BACK TO TERRORISM, WHICH WILL ENABLE THEM TO START ALL OVER AGAIN. THIS IS WHY THE JOB OF PACIFICATION, UNDER GENERAL THANG, IS SO URGENT.

10. I TOLD HIM THAT I HAD HEARD REPORTS THAT THE ARVN WAS NOT REALLY PUTTING ITS BACK INTO PACIFICATION, AND THAT GENERAL THANG, WHILE AN EXCELLENT MAN, WAS NOT BEING GIVEN ENOUGH AUTHORITY. I HEARD THAT ARVN, NOW THAT THE NEW AMERICAN LOGISTIC SUPPORT HAD ARRIVED, WAS ADOPTING AN ATTITUDE OF BUSINESS AS USUAL AND "LET'S NOT CHANGE ANYTHING". AND YET I FELT THAT TH

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MILITARY, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SUCCESSES MADE THIS A PARTICULARLY GOOD MOMENT TO DEAL A DEATH BLOW TO TERRORISM AND TO THE VILLAGE GUERRILLA AND THAT THIS COULD SERIOUSLY AFFECT VIET CONG RECRUITING.

11. KY SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN SOME TRUTH IN WHAT I HAD SAID, BUT THAT HE BELIEVED THAT HE HAD STIRRED THE ARVN UP AND THAT FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES THE REGIONAL FORCES AND POPULAR FORCES WERE UNDER GENERAL THANG. HE BELIEVED THAT THE MANPOWER IN THE VIET CONG HAD SUFFERED A GREAT DEAL AND THEY WERE CONSTANTLY TAKING OFFICERS AS PRISONERS WHO WERE MUCH YOUNGER THAN THEY USED TO BE IN THE OLD DAYS.

12. AFTER KISSINGER LEFT THE ROOM, I SAID TO KY THAT ALL OF US IN THE U.S. GOVERNMENT FELT VERY STRONGLY THAT MRS. KY'S VISIT SHOULD BE PUT OFF UNTIL AFTER OUR ELECTIONS. THIS WAS NOT BECAUSE OF ANY LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN MRS. KY SINCE WE KNEW THAT SHE WOULD ALWAYS SAY AND DO THE RIGHT THING; IT WAS BECAUSE WE KNEW HOW DIFFICULT IT WOULD BE FOR US TO HANDLE TWO MONTHS BEFORE THE CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS. IT WOULD BE INEVITABLE THAT SHE WOULD BE PESTERED AND BOTHERED AND THAT THIS WOULD HAVE AN UNFORTUNATE EFFECT. LODGE
BT

NOTE: PASSED TO S/S-O, WHITE HOUSE, DOD, CIA, 7/28, at 9:35 A.M.

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INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

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JULY 28

13. HE NODDED HIS HEAD AND SAID HE HAD THOUGHT ABOUT THIS A GREAT DEAL, HAVING IN MIND WHAT I SAID TO HIM PREVIOUSLY, AND THAT HE FELT THAT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO PUT OFF HER TRIP UNTIL AFTER ELECTIONS.

14. PRIME MINISTER KY ASKED LANSDALE TO SEE HIM AT NOON, JULY 28. CHINH AND BUI DIEM WERE PRESENT ALSO.

15. KY STRESSED THE NEED FOR MAKING THE SEPTEMBER ELECTIONS GOOD AND HONEST, BELIEVED IN BY THE PEOPLE, AS AN IMPORTANT STEP IN WAGING REVOLUTIONARY WARFARE. HE ASKED LANSDALE FOR SPECIFIC HELP IN THIS TASK, BOTH IN ASSISTING NGUYEN DUC THANG WHOM KY HAS APPOINTED TO HEAD THE INTER-MINISTERIAL GROUP ON ELECTIONS, AND IN HELPING DRAFT A SET OF

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ELECTORAL PRINCIPLES THAT KY CAN SPEAK ABOUT WHEN HE ADDRESSES THE SEMINAR FOR PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS NEXT WEEK. HE ASKED FOR A DRAFT BY JULY 29. (I HAD GIVEN LANSDALE A SIMILAR TASK ON JULY 27, SO THE DRAFT IS TAKING FINAL SHAPE ALREADY).

16. GENERAL THANG ARRIVED AT THIS POINT AND JOINED THE MEETING. THANG HAD BEEN SENT BY KY TO PLEIKU TO SEE GENERAL VINH LOC AND STRAIGHTEN OUT ELECTION IRREGULARITIES. THANG REPORTED THAT VINH LOC HAD BECOME QUITE ANGRY, BUT FINALLY HAD AGREED TO COMPLY WITH KY'S INSTRUCTIONS. CANDIDATES WHO HAD BEEN REGISTERED LATE BY VINH LOC WILL BE WITHDRAWN FROM THE LISTS.

17. KY SPOKE MUSINGLY ABOUT THE FUTURE. HE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS CAN BE HELD BY FEBRUARY OR MARCH 1967, BASED ON THE CONSTITUTION TO BE WRITTEN AND

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ADOPTED MEANWHILE. KY SAID THAT HE WOULD BECOME A "CAMPAIGN MANAGER" TO TRY TO GET GENERAL THIEU ELECTED AS PRESIDENT AND THEN KY CAN GO BACK TO THE AIR FORCE. HE SAID THAT HE IS ARRANGING A WHOLE SERIES OF PUBLIC APPEARANCES FOR THE SHY THIEU. HE ADMITTED THAT THE BUDDHISTS ARE EMOTIONALLY OPPOSED TO THIEU, BUT PROBABLY THE ONLY OTHER PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

WOULD BE SOME OLD MAN SUCH AS SUU. IT WOULD BE DISASTROUS NOT TO HAVE A STRONG EXECUTIVE FOR THE GVN.

19. KY THEN SAID HE NEEDED HELP ALSO WITH LAND REFORM. HE IS READY TO UNDERTAKE A REVOLUTIONARY STEP. HE IS THINKING OF HAVING ELECTED VILLAGE COUNCILS, INCLUDING ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES OF LAND OWNERS, HANDLE LAND OWNERSHIP AND DISTRIBUTION FOR EACH VILLAGE. KY QUOTED HIS FATHER AT LENGTH ON THE FAIRNESS AND PRACTICALITY OF SUCH DECISIONS TAKEN IN THE VILLAGES. KY SAID THAT THIS WOULD REQUIRE AN ENTIRELY NEW LAW WHICH WAS BEING WORKED OUT NOW.

19. LANSDALE POINTED OUT THAT THE U.S. HAD MADE CONSIDERABLE STUDY OF THIS LAND REFORM PROBLEM AND AMERICANS COULD SIT DOWN WITH GVN OFFICIALS IN WORK SESSIONS ON IT. HE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THE DECREE ON HAMLET AND VILLAGE ELECTIONS SHOULD BE ISSUED BEFORE THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS, WITH THE DATE FOR THESE HAMLET/VILLAGE ELECTIONS ANNOUNCED FOR A PERIOD AFTER SEPTEMBER. IT IS POSSIBLE TO KEY THE WHOLE PROCESS OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT INTO THE REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AND PROVIDE REALISTIC INCENTIVE FOR HAMLETS AND VILLAGES THIS WAY. KY AGREED ENTHUSIASTICALLY. CHINH SPOKE UP STRONGLY IN FAVOR OF THIS. LODGE
BT

NOTE: PASSED S/S-O, WHITE HOUSE, DOD, CIA 7/28/66, 0950AM.

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